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87-1057XPreliminary Results of the 1987 Employee Satisfaction Survey

INTRODUCTION

Judging by the returns, some ___ percent of the people at Headquarters have sent in their responses to the "1987 Employee Satisfaction Survey," the baseline for our efforts to develop an entirely new pay and compensation system for the Agency. Responses from the DO have lagged, particularly responses from the field. Although responses go into a computer, it is decidedly not a simple matter of pushing a button and having the results spew out. Rather, the statisticians, who make their living at this arcane art, spend endless hours analyzing the results before issuing a final report. Their report is far more accurate, of course, but generally not very timely. In fact, it typically takes several months.

We're trying a slightly different tack, by giving you the preliminary results while your labors over the lengthy survey are still fresh in your minds. There are some dangers in this--dangers in the sense that later replies, or a fuller examination of the numbers, may yield very different conclusions. What we are doing here is a bit like the election returns you're accustomed to seeing on TV: we are making some projections based on early balloting, but the final result may be very different once all the votes are counted.

The survey first asked you to rate 16 general aspects of employment in terms of their importance to you. The final series of questions measured the degree to which you believed your needs were being met, i.e., how satisfied you were on these same 16 issues.

We used the following scale:

- 5 - Extremely important/satisfied
- 4 - Very important/satisfied
- 3 - Moderately important/satisfied
- 2 - Somewhat important/satisfied
- 1 - Unimportant/Dissatisfied

We also broke out the respondents in terms of pay scale, e.g., General Schedule (GS), Senior Intelligence Service (SIS), Commo (TCO/TCM), and Intelligence Secretary (IS), etc.; grade; age; tenure; whether or not one wrote PARS (i.e., whether or not one was a manager/supervisor); and sex. We also asked for job title, directorate, and office (e.g., SOVA), but found that although we promised anonymity, many of you elected not to answer those questions. While it may signal a high degree of suspicion on the part of some, it perhaps also produced some very candid responses--not an altogether bad tradeoff!

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Here's how those issues stacked up. They are listed in what the survey showed was your rank order of importance. In looking at the following ranking, however, please bear in mind that the first ten items all averaged at least a "4" (i.e., were deemed "very important"), while items four through seven were virtually interchangeable.

A Sense of Accomplishment

- ° This was high on everyone's list (averaging 4.5+ on the 5 point scale). And this was true regardless of the respondent's pay system, grade, age, tenure, supervisory responsibility, or sex.
- ° Satisfaction was a different story, with answers hovering around 3+ (moderately satisfied). Not surprisingly, SIS'ers, GS-15's, and older employees (those age 60 and above) tended to be somewhat more satisfied than their younger or less highly-graded colleagues.

Challenging and Interesting Work

- ° This too tended to be high on everyone's importance list, but with some variations which were more a function of grade and age than of actual years of service. This factor tended to be somewhat more important for those GS-15 and above but somewhat less important for those 50 and older.
- ° Satisfaction varied widely and was very much a function of grade, with those GS-05 and below registering at only slight satisfaction while those GS-15 and above tended to be very satisfied. Satisfaction was also a function of age: those less than 26 were the least satisfied and those 60 years or older the most satisfied. Newer employees tended to be somewhat less satisfied than those with more than 15 years of service, and supervisors were more satisfied than those who do not supervise. One interesting difference related to sex: while men and women attached precisely equal importance to challenging and interesting work, women were much less likely than men to feel satisfied.

Fair Assessment of Job Performance

- ° This was very important to everyone. It was slightly less important to those GS-15 and above, those with 15 or more years of service, or those who actually supervised others.
- ° Most employees tended to be at least somewhat satisfied that their performance was being assessed fairly, but some interesting patterns did develop: SIS'ers were the most satisfied; those on the Commo and IS pay scales, and those age 50-59, were by far the least satisfied.

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SECRETSalary and Benefits

- ° This issue tended to be very important (4+) to virtually everyone, with differences largely a function of grade: the lower your grade, the more salary and benefits mattered. Salary and benefits mattered most to those on the Commo and IS scales.
- ° Most employees were only slightly satisfied (giving this about a 2.8). Those on the Commo pay scale and employees grades GS-06 to GS-08 were the least satisfied. Those age 39 or younger and those with fewer years of service tended to be somewhat less satisfied than those who were older or had been here longer. Men and women expressed equal satisfaction, although women tended to accord this issue a slightly greater importance. About the only group that was moderately satisfied was those GS-15 and above, the same group which termed salary and benefits somewhat less important.

Your Chances for Promotion

- ° In general, most employees rated this "very important." How important depended almost entirely on grade, with the lower graded employees or those on the Commo or IS scales pegging it at a 4+, and the SIS'ers giving it about a 3+. (Okay, no one ever said any particular result should come as a surprise!)
- ° Satisfaction averaged about a 2.6. It was the same two groups that attached greatest importance to promotion--secretaries and Commo personnel--that expressed the least satisfaction (only a bit over the "2" mark on a 1-5 scale).
- ° Satisfaction was very much a function of age and tenure: the older one was (up to age 60) and the longer one had been here, the less satisfied one was. Supervisors were more satisfied than those who did not supervise.
- ° Men and women expressed equal levels of satisfaction, but the gap was greater for women because women (and particularly secretaries) attach so much importance to promotion opportunities.
- ° Interestingly, while as we noted above, importance was related to grade, satisfaction was not. Only SIS'ers expressed as much as "moderate" satisfaction, barely creeping above the "3" mark. All other groups were less satisfied, with those in the GS-06 to GS-08 and GS-12 to GS-14 grade considerably less satisfied than those at other grades.

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SECRETA Competent Supervisor

- ° Most employees rated this item "very important," with secretaries and those at the GS-06 to GS-08 levels being especially concerned over this issue. Employees in grades GS-09 to GS-11 and GS-15 and above were only minimally concerned with this factor. Managers and men generally also tended to be somewhat less concerned.
- ° All groups tended to be reasonably well-satisfied with the competence of their supervisor (averaging almost a 3+), although with some variations. The closest match between satisfaction and importance came for those at the SIS level and those 60 and older. But even secretaries, for whom a competent supervisor was very, very important, were quite satisfied (this would seem to be borne out by the results of the recent secretarial survey). A fairly wide gap, however, developed for those on the Commo pay scale.
- ° This was another case in which men and women were equally satisfied, but the gap was greater for women, who tended to attach greater importance to this factor than did their male colleagues.

Recognition for Good Performance

- ° This was very important to everyone, with about the only difference relating to grade: as one advanced in grade, recognition became slightly less important.
- ° Most people (except the SIS'ers) gave this just under a "3" on the satisfaction scale. Those on the Commo pay scale were the least satisfied (giving this a scant 2.5). There was also a wide gap between the importance of and satisfaction with recognition for those grades GS-06 through GS-08, those ages 26 through 49, those with six to 10 years of Agency service, and those who were not supervisors.

The Way Your Supervisor Treats You

- ° This mattered a lot to most people, especially to secretaries. It was more important to those grades GS-06 to GS-08 than to higher or lower-graded employees and also tended to be a function of age--the younger you were, the more it mattered. It was more important to those with between six and 10 years of service, and it mattered far more to women than to men.

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- Those on the Commo scale were "moderately satisfied" but far less satisfied than those on other pay scales. Those grades GS-12 to GS-14 were just slightly more satisfied than Commo personnel. Only SIS'ers and those 60 and older saw a close convergence between the importance they attached to treatment by a supervisor and the amount of satisfaction they experienced on this score. Women were slightly more satisfied than men--but the gap was a bit wider because women attached greater importance to the way their supervisor treated them.

The Feedback You Receive for Your Work

- Feedback received a solid "4" in terms of importance, slightly less as one advanced in grade or age or for those with more than 15 years of service. Supervisors accorded this only a tad less importance than did non-supervisors and men only a tad less than women.
- Satisfaction overall fell just a hair below a "3." This was another issue on which Commo personnel and those in the GS-12 to GS-14 grade range were significantly less satisfied than those in other pay scales or grade ranges. Those between ages 26 and 49 tended to be less satisfied than their younger or older colleagues. Supervisors and non-supervisors expressed equal satisfaction. Men were slightly less satisfied than women, but the Satisfaction - Importance ("S-I") spread was roughly equal for both sexes.

Management-Employee Communications.

- Another overall "4" in order of importance, with importance dipping as one advances in grade or age. Communications means a bit more to those with three to 10 years of service, to those who do not supervise, and to women. It also matters more to secretaries.
- Satisfaction rated about a 2.75, in other words, for most people there's a great gap between the importance they attach to communications (a "4") and how they see it in action in this Agency. Commo personnel were by far the least satisfied. In general, the higher your grade, the less satisfied you were--until you reached the GS-15/SIS level, at which point you experienced a dramatic turnaround! Those ages 26 to 39 tended to be less satisfied, as did those with between three and 15 years of service. There was no difference in satisfaction levels based on sex, but the spread was greater for women because of the importance they attached to communications.

Interaction With Your Co-Workers

- This item averaged a bit under a "4" in terms of importance, with relatively little difference among the various groups. Men and women attached equal importance to this issue, as did supervisors and non-supervisors.

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- ° What was really surprising was the number of groups for whom importance and satisfaction virtually coincided or for which satisfaction outstripped importance.

A Career Development System

- ° This item averaged about a 3.6 on the importance scale, but was considerably higher for those on the Commo or IS systems, for those GS-05 through GS-08, for younger employees, for those with less tenure and for non-supervisors. It mattered far less to SIS'ers.
- ° Satisfaction overall was just under a 2.5. Those on the GS scale and Commo personnel tended to be slightly less satisfied than those on the IS system, a bit of a surprise because Commo people were the first group to be put on a new pay and compensation system. Those grades GS-12 to GS-14 tended to be less satisfied, while those GS-05 and below and those GS-15 and above were somewhat more satisfied. Men and women were equally satisfied, but again the "S-I" gap was greater for women.

Feeling That You Are a Part of the Agency

- ° This item averaged about a 3.7 in terms of importance, with somewhat higher scores (nearly a "4") for SIS'ers, IS'ers, and GS-05's and below. Men and women attached equal importance to this sense of belonging.
- ° Most employees see a fairly closely correlation between the importance they attach to this issue and how satisfied they are. SIS'ers saw almost a perfect match, while the gap was a bit wider for those on the Commo or IS scales. In general, satisfaction tends to increase with grade and age. Supervisors are far more satisfied than non-supervisors and men considerably more satisfied than women. Two questions on "organizational commitment" tend to underscore how people feel about the Agency. Agency employees very strongly agreed with this statement: "I really care about the future of the Agency." They very strongly disagreed with this statement: "Deciding to work for the Agency was a definite mistake on my part."

The Classroom and On-the-Job Training You Receive

- ° Training averaged about a 3.6 in terms of importance, but showed fairly wide variations among different groups. Those on the Commo and IS scales tended to rate it higher--perhaps because training is an important element of their pay and compensation package. Training was also very important for GS-05's and below but dropped off markedly in importance as one advanced in grade. A similar drop was noted in the age and tenure scales. Non-supervisors attached far greater importance to training than did supervisors and women far greater importance than men. Those GS-15 and above were the least interested in training.

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- ° Satisfaction fell just below a "3," with relatively little variation among the different groups. IS'ers, GS-05's and below, those less than 26, those with less than 3 years of service, and women tended to be a tad more satisfied; however, they also tended to see the greatest gap between their level of satisfaction and the importance they attached to training.

A Reasonable Workload

- ° This item averaged about a "3.6" on the importance scale. Its importance was very much a function of grade: the higher the grade, the less it mattered. It mattered a good deal to secretaries and very little to SIS'ers. It mattered more to non-supervisors and to women. But again, these differences were slight, and even secretaries--who gave it the highest "importance" rating--averaged only a 3.75.
- ° Satisfaction with the workload edged just above a "3," with relatively little variation among groups. Older employees tended to be somewhat more satisfied than younger employees, but this may simply reflect the "tilt" caused by the SIS'ers, whose satisfaction with the workload outstripped the importance they attached to it (being able to delegate does have its advantages!).

A Clear Statement of Work Responsibilities

- ° This item too averaged about a 3.6 in terms of importance, but with some wide variations. It was most important to those on the IS scale and to lower-graded employees generally. It mattered barely a whit to SIS'ers who gave it a scant 2.6. It mattered more to those 26 and below and to those 60 and older. It mattered less to those with 15 years or more of service than to newer employees. It mattered more to non-supervisors and far more to women.

Despite the lack of importance they attached to this issue, SIS'ers were the most satisfied--giving this a 3.5 compared to an overall average of about 3.2. Commo personnel and those grades GS-12 to GS-14 were the least satisfied. The higher your grade (up to GS-15), the less satisfied you tended to be, although length of service alone did not appear to be a factor. Supervisors were far more satisfied than non-supervisors. While men and women expressed equal levels of satisfaction (about a 3.2), the gap was greater for women who, as we noted above, attached considerable importance to this item.

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WHAT NEXT?

Where does all this leave us in terms of developing a new pay and compensation system for most Agency career tracks. Certainly the survey shows that most of our people are at least "somewhat satisfied" with what they have. Does that mean we should stick with the status quo? Perhaps--but perhaps not. Particularly when we consider the four areas in which the survey showed the greatest gap between employee satisfaction and employee expectations:

- Salary and Benefits.
- Chances for Promotion.
- Management-Employee Communications.
- A Career Development System.

Moreover, the variations that exist for particular groups and the responses to specific questions seem to be telling us we are very much on track in seeking a better way of hiring, utilizing, training, evaluating, paying and promoting our people. Indeed, these statements drew some of the strongest responses:

DISAGREE	I am getting paid as much as I would outside the Agency.
DISAGREE	Current opportunities for advancement are excellent in my occupation.
STRONGLY AGREE	There should be a way for employees to continue to advance in the Agency without getting into management.

Admittedly, the replies of Commo personnel were surprising and a bit disconcerting. It may be that their relative dissatisfaction on certain issues reflected the inevitable realities of a genuine pay-for-performance system: not everyone gains. Or perhaps some Commo managers find it easier to give a little something to everyone rather than making the hard decision to give greater rewards to the high achievers. It may be that one or more of the key features of any banding system, e.g., the difficulty of moving from one pay band to another (compared with movement along a band) or the lack of a clear sense of hierarchy, proved disappointing. Or it may be some other aspect of the Commo banding system or even the general Commo culture that produced somewhat more negative replies. Clearly we need to have the statisticians analyze the Commo responses more closely to see what they are telling us.

Finally, we would return to our initial caveat: these are the preliminary results of the survey. The report may look quite different when all the results are in and analyzed. In either case, we promise to let you know.

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